

## Message Text

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REF: STEWART/SPLANE TELCON

REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO IS FOLLOWING STORY ON COSTA RICAN  
ELECTIONS FROM JANUARY 18 ISSUE OF SAN JOSE'S ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE PAPER THE TICO TIMES:

"SOMEWHAT MORE THAN 700.000 COSTA RICANS WILL GO TO 4815 POLLING  
PLACES SCATTERED THROUGH THE COUNTRY ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 TO  
VOTE IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS THAT WILL MARK SEVERAL MILESTONES IN  
THE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT OF THIS NATION.

THIS WILL BE THE BIGGEST ELECTION IN COSTA RICA'S  
HISTORY(875.041 REGISTERED VOTERS), WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER  
OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES (EIGHT), AND IT WILL MARK THE  
FIRST TIME THAT YOUTH(18-YEAR-OLD AND UP) HAVE VOTED.

IT IS ALSO THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THAT COSTA RICANS  
FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF A RUN-OFF ELECTION FOR PRESIDENT.

IF NONE OF THE EIGHT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES SHOULD  
REGISTER 40 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE, A RUN-OFF ELECTION  
OF THE TWO HIGHEST WILL BE HELD THE FIRST SUNDAY IN APRIL.

THE NEWLY-ELECTED PRESIDENT AND HIS TWO  
VICE-PRESIDENTS WILL BE INAUGURATED MAY 8, AT WHICH TIME  
PRESIDENT JOSE FIGUERES WILL TURN OVER THE REINS OF  
GOVERNMENT IN THE FORMAL AND TRADITIONAL "CHANGE OF  
GOVERNMENT" CEREMONY, USUALLY HELD IN THE NATIONAL STADIUM  
AT LA SABANA.

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IN ADDITION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL TICKETS, VOTERS ON

FEBRUARY 3 WILL ELECT 57 NEW CONGRESSMEN TO THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AS WELL AS MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

THREE ADDITIONAL PARTIES ARE PRESENTING TICKETS FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND MUNICIPAL CANDIDATES, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NO ENTRIES FOR PRESIDENT. THEY ARE THE NATIONAL REPUBLICANS, THE INDEPENDENTS AND THE CARTAGO AGRICULTURAL UNION.

ALL ELECTION PROCEDURES ARE UNDER CONTROL OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL, COMPOSED OF FIVE MAGISTRATES, WHO EXERCISE COMPLETE COMMAND OF THE VOTING PROCESS AS WELL AS CONTROL OF THE CIVIL GUARD AND NATIONAL POLICE FORCES DURING THE ELECTORAL PERIOD.

MEMBERS OF THE TRIBUNAL ARE LIC. FRANCISCO JOSE SAENZ MEZA, PRESIDENT; JUAN RODRIGUEZ ULLOA, MANUEL RAFAEL IGLASIAS, ALVARO PINTO LOPEZ AND ISAAC ORTIZ CHACON.

THIS BODY HAS COMPLETE CONTROL OF COUNTING OF THE VOTES, AND MUST MAKE AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE ELECTIONS AS TO THE OFFICIAL AND FINAL OUTCOME.

WHILE SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS HAVE BEEN PREDICTING THE PROBABILITY OF A RUN-OFF ELECTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, OTHER ANALYSTS TEND TO DOUBT THAT THIS WILL OCCUR.

ASSUMING A VOTE OF 700,000, A MINIMUM OF 280,000 WILL BE NEEDED TO WIN IN THE FIRST ELECTION, OR 40 PERCENT.

THESE ANALYSTS ARGUE THAT LIC. DANIEL ODUBER CANDIDATE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, WHICH STILL HAS THE STRONGEST POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, OBTAINED 218,590 VOTES IN LOSING BY A NARROW MARGIN TO PROF. JOSE JOAQUIN TREJOS IN 1966.

THEY CLAIM THAT NOW, EIGHT YEARS LATER AND WITH AN ESTIMATED 30 PERCENT INCREASE IN VOTER REGISTRATION FROM THE YOUTH VOTE AS WELL AS NORMAL POPULATION INCREASE, ODUBER SHOULD BE ABLE TO EASILY TOP 300,000, OR WELL OVER THE 40 PERCENT MARK.

OTHERS CLAIM, HOWEVER, THAT A HEAVILY DIVIDED VOTE BETWEEN THE EIGHT CANDIDATES WILL WORK AGAINST ODUBER, AND FEEL THAT RODRIGO CARAZO OF DEMOCRATIC RENOVATION AND JORGE GONZALEZ MARTEN OF THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENTS WILL DRAW HEAVILY FROM THE NORMAL LIBERATION VOTE, THUS SAVING DR. FERNANDO TREJOS OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION. THEY ALSO

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FEEL THAT THE FAR LEFT (MANUEL MORA VALVERDE OF SOCIAL ACTION AND JOSE FRANCISCO AGUILAR BULGARELLI OF THE SOCIALISTS) WILL DRAW MORE FROM LIBERATION THAN IN THE PAST.

MOST OBSERVERS FEEL THAT LIBERATION WILL LOSE CONTROL OF CONGRESS IN THIS ELECTION, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 25 YEARS, MOSTLY BECAUSE OF THE WIDELY DIVIDED TICKETS, A MINIMUM OF 29 DEPUTIES IS NEEDED FOR MAJORITY CONTROL OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND LIBERATION AT PRESENT

HAS 31.

THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGNS WERE FINANCED IN ADVANCE FOR THE FIRST TIME FROM GOVERNMENT FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A NEW LAW SUPPOSEDLY DESIGNED TO REMOVE THE ADVANTAGES OF WEALTHY SPONSORS FROM POLITICAL PARTIES.

UNDER THE LAW, EACH PARTY IS ENTITLED TO A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL CAMPAIGN EXPENSES APPROVED, THIS YEAR 18 MILLION COLONES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PERCENTAGE OF VOTES OBTAINED FOUR YEARS EARLIER. PARTIES WHICH DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE PREVIOUS ELECTION DO NOT GET ANY CAMPAIGN SUBSIDIES.

THOSE RECEIVING SUBSIDIES THIS TIME ARE LIBERATION, UNIFICATION, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, DEMOCRATS AND SOCIAL ACTION. NATIONAL INDEPENDENTS, DEMOCRATIC RENOVATION AND SOCIALISTS HAVE TO RAISE THEIR OWN FUNDS.  
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